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IN THE CLAIMS

Kindly amend the claims as shown in the following complete listing of all claims:

1. (canceled)

2. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 28, wherein the switching means ~~acts on each of the first shutoff elements according to the following single sequence of operations~~ comprises:

means for opening each first shutoff element for a ~~preset time and/or quantity of first or second fluid~~ until the first branch is full of the selected fluid liquid and the fluid selected liquid is discharged from the handpieces; and

means for closing each of the first shutoff elements after the first branch is full of the selected fluid liquid and the fluid selected liquid is discharged from the handpieces.

3. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 28, wherein the switching means ~~acts on each of the first, second and third shutoff elements in such a way as to perform the following operations in succession~~ comprises:

means for switching the supply of the first branch from the main liquid supply line to the second branch through a combination or succession of operations to close the third shutoff element on the main liquid supply line and to open the second shutoff element on the second branch;

means for opening each of the first shutoff elements for a preset time or quantity of fluid, so as to create a preset flow of the ~~second fluid~~ disinfecting liquid from the second branch into the first branch, and thus completely renewing the fluid liquid in the

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first branch with the flow of ~~the second fluid~~ disinfecting liquid from the second branch until the ~~second fluid~~ disinfecting liquid is discharged from the handpieces;

means for closing each of the first shutoff elements after a preset time or when a preset quantity of fluid is finished flowing;

means for further switching the supply of the first branch from the second branch to the main liquid supply line through a combination or succession of operations to close the second shutoff element on the second branch and to open the third shutoff element on the main liquid supply line so as to return to the condition in which the first branch is supplied with ~~the first fluid~~ water from the water main;

means for opening each of the first shutoff elements for a preset time or quantity of fluid, so as to create a preset flow of ~~the first fluid~~ water from the water main into the first branch, and thus completely flushing the first branch with the ~~first fluid~~ water from the water main until the ~~first fluid~~ water is discharged from the handpieces;

means for closing each of the first shutoff elements after a preset time or when a preset quantity of ~~fluid~~ liquid is finished flowing.

4. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 28, wherein the first container for the handpieces forms part of the dental unit, being built into or mounted on the body of the dental unit, and being equipped with a conduit leading into a drain.

5. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 28, wherein the first container for the handpieces is a separate part applied to or positioned near the dental unit when treatments are being performed on the first fluid supply branch.

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6. (canceled)

7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 7~~ claim 28, wherein the second and third branches are equipped with respective closures used to connect up the first and second tanks ~~of the fluids to be supplied~~ and are equipped with respective tubes connected to the second and third branches, each tube being inserted into the ~~corresponding~~ respective tank to draw the fluid liquid from inside the ~~corresponding~~ respective tank ~~on a control from~~ as controlled by the first control means.

9. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the second supply branch starts at the corresponding second branch closure and connects directly to the third branch closure immediately downstream of the tube of the third branch closure, so that the second fluid liquid and the alternative third fluid liquid are, by second control means, supplied alternately through a single second branch, which is connected to the main liquid supply line.

10. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the second branch extends from the corresponding second branch closure and connects directly to the closure of the third branch that supplies the alternative third fluid liquid.

11. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the second and third branch closures are fitted, at the top end of each of the respective tubes, with respective valve elements designed to operate in conjunction with second control

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means to enable the corresponding fluid liquid to flow, when required, into the single second branch.

12. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the closure of the second branch that supplies the fluid liquid has a channel connected to the third branch to convey the fluid liquid in the direction of the other closure.

13. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the closure of the third branch that supplies the alternative fluid liquid has a T-channel to allow the fluids liquids to flow alternately into the main liquid supply line.

14. (original) The apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the closures are equipped with respective non-return valves, at the top ends of the respective tubes.

15. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the second control means for controlling the supply of each of the fluids liquids comprises an air channel made in each of the closures operated by a unit designed to generate pressure inside the respective tanks so as to allow the supply of the selected fluid liquid.

16. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the second branch connecting the two closures is equipped with second valve means designed to safely shut off the second branch when the alternative fluid liquid is being used.

17. (currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 7~~ claim 28, wherein the alternative fluid third liquid is purified water.

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18. (currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 7~~ claim 28, wherein the ~~alternative fluid~~ third liquid is purified water with patient-specific drugs added.

19. (currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 7~~ claim 28, wherein the ~~alternative fluid~~ third liquid is a sterile, isotonic, saline fluid.

20. (currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 7~~ claim 28, wherein the first and second tanks are ~~of the disposable type~~.

21. (currently amended) The apparatus according to ~~claim 7~~ claim 28, wherein the first and second tanks are ~~of the type that can~~ adapted to be sterilized and reused.

22. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 28, where the dental unit is equipped with a microprocessor to control its main and auxiliary functions, and the first control means comprises a pushbutton located on the dental unit, the pushbutton being controlled by the microprocessor to allow the coordinated opening and closing of the first, second and third shutoff elements according to preset parameters that can be stored in the microprocessor and that control the flow time and/or the quantity of the ~~fluid~~ liquid.

23. (canceled).

24. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 28, wherein the control means comprises a pair of pushbuttons located on the dental unit, one of which is connected to settable timing means that are activated when the first shutoff elements

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open or close or when the main line is full and that are designed to re-close or re-open the shutoff elements when the preset time has elapsed; the other pushbutton being connected to the second and third shutoff elements and being designed to switch from one to the other according to the treatments to be performed.

25. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 28, wherein each of the first, second and third shutoff elements is connected to an operating unit constituting the switching means connected to the first control means.

26. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 28, where the first ~~fluid~~ liquid supply branch comprises, as one of the patient use-points, a fourth branch that supplies a ~~fluid~~ liquid to a tumbler and that is equipped with a fourth shutoff element, wherein the first control means are also connected to the fourth shutoff element of the fourth branch, which is equipped with a switching unit so that the fourth branch can be treated in the same way as the other branches.

27. (canceled)

28. (currently amended) An apparatus for supplying and sanitizing the water line of a dental unit, ~~the water line~~ said apparatus comprising:

a main ~~fluid~~ liquid supply line adapted to be connected at one end to ~~at least one source of a first fluid~~ a water main and connected at the other end to ~~the~~ an associated dental unit through ~~at least one~~ a first branch for supplying a set of use-points comprising a plurality of handpieces;

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first shutoff elements each located on the first branch that supplies the handpieces, each of said first shutoff elements adapted to selectively allow ~~fluid~~ liquid flow from said first branch to a respective handpiece when required;

~~the apparatus comprising:~~

~~at least one~~ a second branch connected to the first branch for conveying a ~~second or a third fluid~~ liquid into the main line first branch, the second branch and the main liquid supply line being equipped with respective second and third shutoff elements designed adapted to switch the supply of the first branch between: (i) ~~the first fluid water~~ flowing from the main ~~fluid~~ liquid supply line; or, (ii) ~~the fluid liquid~~ flowing from the second branch;

a first interchangeable tank adapted to contain a disinfecting liquid, said first interchangeable tank connected to the second branch for supplying the second branch with ~~either the second or the third fluid~~ disinfecting liquid from the first interchangeable tank;

a third branch fluidically connected to the first branch directly or through the second branch;

a second interchangeable tank adapted to contain a third liquid, said second interchangeable tank connected to the third branch;

~~a first container for holding the handpieces or ends of conduits connecting with the dental unit~~ during sterilization, disinfection, flushing or cleaning;

first control means operatively connected to the first, second and third shutoff elements for conducting the coordinating opening and closing of each of the first, second and third shutoff elements according to the type of treatment to be achieved;

switching means connected to the first control means for controlling the opening and closing of the first, second and third shutoff elements, said switching means being

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manually or automatically triggered to perform cycles of treatment on the first branch with a selected liquid comprising at least one of: (i) ~~the first fluid~~ water from the water main; and, (ii) ~~the fluid~~ the disinfecting liquid conveyed from the first interchangeable tank by the second branch; and, (iii) the third liquid conveyed from the second interchangeable tank through the third branch.